



Media Release

Vodafone sponsors prestigious Paul Lockyer Award

Monday, December 12, 2016

Australia's media charity, The Kennedy Foundation, is proud to announce Vodafone has become the major sponsor of the coveted Paul Lockyer Award for Outstanding Regional Broadcast Reporting.

The award – to be presented at the 6th Annual Kennedy Awards on August 11, 2017 - recognises the legacy of the late, legendary ABC and Nine network journalist who became nationally known for his passionate and expert coverage of rural issues throughout Australia.

The new **Vodafone Paul Lockyer Award** will continue to acknowledge superb regional broadcast reporting by media professionals who tirelessly keep the bush and regional centres tuned-in to the latest events impacting on their lives and shaping their futures.

Kennedy Foundation chairman Mr Simon Dulhunty said that since the inaugural awards in 2012 the Paul Lockyer Award had a special place in the heart of the foundation.

“We were seeking a partner for this award with strong links to regional communities and we are delighted to have the Vodafone brand, and its fantastic people, on board with us for next year,” Mr Dulhunty said.

“As reporting and broadcasting on regional issues continues to be a major focus of media coverage around Australia every year, the Kennedy Foundation is proud to have Vodafone at its side as the ideal sponsor of the Paul Lockyer Award.

“Regional journalism is the heart and soul of Australian media. Anyone that backs it is backing all people from the bush and giving a voice to the smaller towns. Regional reporting provides a vital link to regional communities just as Vodafone continues to do and we are extremely grateful to have the support of Vodafone in 2017, the sixth year of the Kennedy Awards.”

General Manager of External Affairs at Vodafone Australia, Mr Anthony Flannery, said the company was honoured to sponsor the Paul Lockyer Award for Outstanding Regional Broadcast Reporting.

“This award not only recognises the legacy Paul has left behind as an outstanding journalist, but the time he took to raise awareness of the issues faced by people living in Australia’s regional and remote communities,” Mr Flannery said.

“We are proud that his legacy lives on in this award which acknowledges the contribution of other media professionals who share the same commitment to regional issues as Paul.”

Background to the Paul Lockyer Award

The Paul Lockyer Award recognises the skills of a veteran journalist who carved a name for himself as an outstanding commentator and reporter on many issues but his greatest passion was his coverage of rural stories.

Paul was killed in a helicopter crash on Lake Eyre in South Australia on August 18, 2011, along with fellow ABC employees, pilot Gary Ticehurst and cameraman John Bean.

In 2013 he was awarded the Centenary Medal for his coverage of rural issues, particularly the extensive and punishing drought, and was twice awarded the NSW Farmers’ Association Mackellar Media Prize for coverage of rural stories.

The Outstanding Regional Reporting Award was first introduced at the inaugural awards in 2012 with The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, taking out the category for its coverage of devastating floods that swept through the region.

In 2013 Seven News’ Hugh Whitfield won for his coverage of devastating bushfires in the NSW Central West.

In 2014 Amy Phillips of Prime News Lismore won the Lockyer for coverage of CSG gas exploration in the NSW Northern Rivers region.

In 2015 the ABC’s 7.30 Report was recognised for its trail-blazing coverage of the ICE drug crisis consuming small communities.

The 2016 Lockyer was awarded to Joanna Woodburn of ABC Regional TV for her stories on lethal asbestos deposits near Orange.

Since 2012, when the first awards were hatched in a pub in Sydney to honour the life of the late legendary Sydney crime reporter Les Kennedy, the Kennedy Foundation has been seeking a new partner with strong links to regional communities to support the Paul Lockyer Award for Outstanding Regional Broadcast Reporting.

The Kennedy Foundation, with Vodafone as its latest partner, will continue to recognise the very best of Australia’s regional broadcast reporters at the annual awards - now the most prestigious event on the national media calendar.

The foundation is proud to point out that what began five years ago as the first awards of its kind in New South Wales has quickly evolved into a national event, attracting the cream of Australian media talent.

The Coca-Cola Journalist of the Year carries a \$25,000 prize, the richest prize in Australian journalism and its presentation winds-up a night where the skills and talent of our finest media professionals are recognised with the awarding of 33 Spirax Trophies.

The Kennedy Foundation is a registered charity, formed in early 2014, to support media professionals facing hardship, particularly those in regional areas where the tyranny of distance can radically compound a family or personal crisis.

The 2017 NRMA Kennedy Awards for Excellence in Journalism will again be staged at the Australian Turf Club's Grand Ballroom, Royal Randwick, on Friday, August 11.

Media contact: Steve Warnock, Kennedy Foundation General Manager
M: 0424 407 717